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1

U.S. Statement at the UPR of -Nicaragua, 19th Session, May 7, 2014

The United States thanks the delegation from Nicaragua for its presentation.

We note our deep concern about recent changes to the Nicaraguan Constitution and Military Code, which were passed without an open and transparent public process. These changes undermine democratic institutions, expand the military's role in civilian affairs, and unduly restrict citizens' ability to hold their government accountable through genuine, periodic elections.

We remain concerned about the erosion of freedom of expression, including reports of harassment of journalists and independent media, and reports that the government employed state resources to suppress dissenting views.

Additionally, we note the abundance of credible reports of excessive use of force by the police and abuse of suspects during arrest and detention.

We are concerned about reports of governance gaps and impunity. Allegations of institutionalized party favoritism, failures to enforce labor laws, and undue restrictions on access to public information are widespread.

We recommend that Nicaragua:

1. Ensure that constitutional protections for freedom of expression, including press freedom, are upheld; and refrain from using administrative, judicial, and financial means to unduly restrict the exercise of this right;
2. Investigate credible allegations of human rights violations by security forces, and prosecute, as appropriate, parties responsible in accordance with its international obligations and commitments;
3. Effectively enforce labor laws with appropriate penalties for violations, and ensure that all citizens have access to government services, regardless of political affiliation.